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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a study in which three separate factors with substantial face validity were replicated, factor analyzing 74 attitudes-toward-women items with two college samples of 159 and 195 subjects. Three sex-role attitudes scales based on the factor analyses were related to 10 personality variables. The relationsips supported the psychological healthiness of liberal attitudes toward women. The study focused on significant differences between correlations of the sexism scales with personality variables. Two-way interactions between sexism variables were tested by relating the variables in pairs to the personality measures. There were few significant interactions, but the results in general supported the need to consider attitudes toward women as multi-dimensional. (Author)

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Three Dimensions of Sexist Attitudes: Differential Relationships with Personality Variables

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Abstract

Three separate factors with substantial face validity were replicated, factor analyzing 74 attitudes toward women items with two college samples of 159 and 195 subjects. Three sex-role attitudes scales based on the factor analyses were related to ten personality variables, the relationships supporting the psychological healthiness of liberal attitudes toward women. The study focused on significant differences between correlations of the sexism scales with personality variables. Two-way interactions between sexism variables were tested by relating the variables pairwise to the personality measures. There were few significant interactions, but the results in general supported the need to consider attitudes toward women as multi-dimensional.

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Three Dimensions of Sexist Attitudes: Differential Relationships with Personality Variables

The literature on feminist and sexist attitudes indicates a number of relationships to personality variables. There is considerable convergence in the findings, indicating that for both men and women pro-feminist or pro-equality attitudes are related to personality variables that suggest adjustment, mental health, or an absence of maladaptive traits. More liberated women tend to be higher in authonomy, curiosity, and flexibility and lower in neuroticism, authoritarianism, dogmatism, extrinsic motivations, and defensiveness. Men who favor equality of sex roles have been found to be more self-reliant and resourceful and lower in need for power, neuroticism, authoritarianism, and conformity (Goldberg, 1972; Kahoe, 1974b; Worrell & Worrell, 1971).

Most studies have viewed sexist attitudes as essentially unidimensional. Spence and Helmreich (1972a) factor analyzed a number of inventory items relating to women's roles and found from two to four factors among several groups of students and adults. In their experimental study (Spence & Helmreich, 1972b), however, they ignored factor scores and employed a unidimensional measure of "Attitudes Toward Women," scored in the liberal direction. Kahoe (1974b) construed both a general measure called "egalitarianism" and a dimension labeled "chivalry" and related both of them to ten measures of personality. Chivalry was derived in a rather complex manner, though, and resulted in different scales for men and women. Nonetheless Kahoe's two measures and their different relationships to

personality suggested that different dimensions of sexism might profitably be studied.

The purpose of the present study was to identify more systematically the factoral dimensions of attitudes toward women and to relate them to the same personality variables used by Kahoe (1974b). This approach provided a systematic comparison of the utility of the factoral dimensions and their differential relationships to the several personality variables.

Method

Factor Analysis

The 55 items from the Spence and Helmreich (1972a) Attitudes Toward Women Scale and 19 further items from Kahoe's (1974b) research were combined in a single inventory and administered to 159 students in a liberal arts college in Kentucky and to 195 students in a state university in Minnesota. Separate Principle Components factor analyses were conducted for each group to replicate the factors. The factor analyses were subjected to Varimax rotation (an orthogonal solution), extracting from three to five factors.

The three-factor solutions were most meaningful and replicated on both student samples. Three scales were derived from the factors, selecting from 9 to 12 items that had strong loadings on the respective factors from both of our samples, and also that were relatively pure measures of each factor. The three scales were scored for all research participants.

Personality Measures

The true-false personality inventory earlier used by Kahoe (1974b) was given to 73 Kentucky students and 180 Minnesota students who had also taken the enlarged attitudes toward women scale. Included in the inventory

were measures of Authoritarianism, Dogmatism, Internal Locus of Control, Responsibility, Intrinsic and Extrinsic Religious Orientations, and two measures each of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations. These measures have been described earlier (Kahoe, 1974a).

Statistical Analyses

For women and men separately, the three dimensions of attitudes toward women were correlated with the ten personality variables, using Pearson product moment correlation coefficients. (Analyses by sex and by schools separately were also conducted, but differences between the school samples were slight, and these are ignored in the present paper). Multiple regression analyses were also conducted, relating pairs of the sexism dimensions to personality variables primarily to test for two way interactions between the sexism dimensions. Ad hoc tests were made to determine the significance of differences between correlations among the dimensions of sexist attitudes.

Results

Factor Analyses

The factor analyses were most meaningful with three-factor solutions for both the Kentucky and the Minnesota samples. The three factors were also close replications of Spence and Helmreich's (1972a) factor solution for University of Texas male students. The first factor in the Kentucky sample (the second in the Minnesota sample) consisted almost entirely of items worded in the conservative or traditional direction, for example, "Some jobs around the house are women's work that a man just naturally wouldn't care to do." This factor was labeled "Traditionalism." The second Kentucky factor (first among the Minnesota students) was composed primarily of liberally worded items that give women equitable economic and

social roles, for example, "Society should regard the services rendered by women workers as valuable as those of men." On all of the items loading primarily on this second factor women students, on the average, were more liberal than men, most of the differences being statistically significant. For that reason (and because the content of the items promotes the liberation of females), we called the factor "Femlib." The third factor in both samples, and also for Spence and Helmreich's Texas men, consisted primarily of items on which men tend to respond in a more "liberal" or nontraditional way. The content of these items can be seen as giving men some advantage or removing some possible advantages granted women by tradition, for example, "Women earning as much as their dates should bear equally the expense when they go out together." We called this factor "Manlib," in contrast to the Femlib factor.

Selecting items that had relatively high and pure loadings on both the Kentucky and the Minnesota factor analyses, we devised a 12-item scale to measure Traditionalism, scoring in the opposite or liberal direction. Similarly 11 items were selected to measure Femlib and 9 items for Manlib, scoring them also in the liberal direction.

General Main Effects

While it is not the focus of this paper, the general relationship between attitudes toward women and personality variables should be noted. For men liberal sex role attitudes (particularly as measured by the Traditionalism scale) were positively related to Internal Locus of Control and Responsibility and negatively related to Authoritarianism, Dogmatism, Extrinsic Religion, and extrinsic motivations. These relationships all support the positive mental health implications of liberal attitudes toward women. For women liberal attitudes were significantly related to

Internal Control and one measure of intrinsic motivation in the positive direction. Both Authoritarianism and Dogmatism were negatively related (at the .01 level) to liberal attitudes on all three sexism measures. There were some slight but statistically significant negative relationships between liberal attitudes and the extrinsic motivations and the religious orientations. It is noteworthy that the relationships to Intrinsic Religion, while statistically significant, were considerably lower than Kahoe (1974b) found for a comparable sample in 1972. This suggests that traditional religious values are becoming less identified with restrictive views of women's roles.

Differential Relations with Sexism Variables

While there is obviously a general liberal-conservative dimension underlying attitudes toward women, our main emphasis in this paper is that there are meaningfully differentiated attitudes in this domain. We have just indicated the general findings, but there were significant differences among the sexism variables, in their relations to the personality variables. For men the relationships of Authoritarianism and Dogmatism were much higher with Traditionalism than with Femlib and Manlib; all four of the comparisons of differences between correlation coefficients were significant at the .01 level. Responsibility was positively related to liberal attitudes on the Traditionalism and Femlib scales and negatively related to Manlib; these differences were significant at the .01 level for Traditionalism vs. Manlib and at the .05 level for Femlib vs. Manlib. This replicated Kahoe's (1974b) finding of a relationship for men between Responsibility and Chivalry. (Chivalry was a differential measure of liberal vs. male self-serving attitudes). In addition a measure of extrinsic motivation had a significant negative relationship with the Traditionalism

scale and a slight positive relation to Femlib, the difference being significant at the .05 level.

For women there were two significant differences between correlations, both involving differences between Femlib and Manlib and the two religious orientations. For Extrinsic Religion Femlib was negatively related and Manlib was positively related to liberal sex role attitudes; the difference was significant at the .02 level. Intrinsic religion had a negligible relationship to Femlib and a moderate negative relationship to Manlib, the difference being significant at the .03 level.

Interactions between Sexism Variables

Another test for differential relationships among the sexism or sex role attitudes is interactions between the scales, in their relations to personality variables. For example, men who are high on Manlib may be quite different types, depending on whether they are generally liberal or if they are also self-serving by denying women equality of opportunity. In the pairwise tests of interaction between sexism variables, as they related to the ten personality variables, there were four interactions significant at the .05 level and four more that just failed of statistical significance (employing multiple regression analysis).

For women Traditionalism and Femlib interacted in their relationship to Intrinsic Job Motivation; Femlib and Manlib similarly had a significant interaction with Intrinsic Religious Orientation. For men Traditionalism interacted with Femlib for Extrinsic Job Motivation; Traditionalism interacted with Manlib for Extrinsic Religious Orientation. The latter is the most readily interpretable interaction. For low levels of Manlib (that is, for men who respect the traditional "male chivalry" values, level of Traditionalism made little difference in the Extrinsic Religion score; they were intermediate on that variable. For high levels of

Manlib, though, the "true liberal" who was high on Traditionalism (scored in the liberal direction), was the lowest in Extrinsic Religion. The traditionalist (low in Traditionalism) who was high in Manlib could be seen as a "misogynist" (consistently against advantage for women); males in that cell were highest in Extrinsic Religion, or prone to use religion in instrumental, self-serving ways.

Discussion

Three kinds of evidence support the differential effects among inventory items measuring attitudes toward women. Factor analysis identified three factors in two separate samples of mixed women and men college students, similar to Spence and Helmreich's factors with college men. For our men the three scales had an average intercorrelation of .34 (using Fischer's z transformation), and women had an average intercorrelation of .50. This tends to support Spence and Helmreich's finding of fewer factors among women, and the generalization that men differentiate among the domain of women's attitudes more than do women.

Several statistically significant differences among correlations of sexism variables with personality measures also give support to the psychological distinctiveness of the several dimensions of sexism. The interactions among sexism variables gave only modest evidence that people can be construed into "types" on the basis of their attitudes toward women. Most of the personality variance could be related to the relatively independent sexism dimensions, but in a few cases the dimensions did seem to interact to produce a distinctive typology.

In conclusion, this study has shown that attitudes toward women are not unidimensional, and the several dimensions seem to be especially

differentiated among men. Any generalizations about the relationship of sexism or pro-liberation attitudes to behavioral or personality variables must be qualified by these facts.

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THREE DIMENSIONS OF SEXISM
Scale Items

Number in Inventory	Item

Traditionalism Scale (Tradit)

15. Many women in the women's liberation movement are radicals who really don't know what is best for themselves.
33. It is childish for a woman to assert herself by retaining her maiden name after marriage.
37. Most women really enjoy the special status they have by custom and would rather not lose it through the supposed campaign for "equality."
46. There are some professions and types of businesses that are more suitable for men than women.
49. A wife should make every effort to minimize irritation and inconvenience to the male head of the family.
52. Women should take the passive role in courtship.
64. Some jobs around the house are women's work that a man just naturally wouldn't care to do.
66. As head of the household, the husband should have more responsibility for the family's financial plans than his wife.
68. The husband should be regarded as the legal representative of the family group in all matters of law.
70. Most women need and want the kind of protection and support that men have traditionally given them.
73. It's a good thing we have laws to protect women from dangerous and strenuous jobs.
74. It would be ridiculous for a law to say that help-wanted ads couldn't be listed by "male" and "female."

Female Liberation Scale (Femlib)

6. Women should take increasing responsibility for leadership in solving the intellectual and social problems of the day.
9. Vocational and professional schools should admit the best qualified students, independent of sex.
12. Men and women doing the same work should be paid the same wages.
17. Husbands and wives should be equal partners in planning the family budget.
24. There should be a strict merit system in job appointment and promotion without regard to sex.
26. Parental authority and responsibility for discipline of the children should be equally divided between husband and wife.
34. Society should regard the services rendered by the women workers as valuable as those of men.
44. The husband should not be favored by law over the wife in the disposal of family property or income.
59. Women should be given equal opportunity with men for apprenticeship in the various trades.
62. In consideration for a job, men and women should be treated exactly alike.
35. It is only fair that male workers should receive more pay than women even for identical work. (negative keying)

Male Liberation Scale (Manlib)

4. Divorced men should help support their children but should not be required to pay alimony if their wives are capable of working.
8. Special attentions like standing up for a woman when she comes into a room or giving her a seat on a crowded bus are outmoded and should be discontinued.
25. A woman should be as free as a man to propose marriage.

(continued)

Three Dimensions of Sexism Scale Items (continued)

Manlib (continued)

28. Women earning as much as their dates should bear equally the expense when they go out together.
39. In case of divorce, a woman should pay her ex-husband alimony if she has money and he doesn't.
45. Wifely submission is an outworn virtue.
67. If both husband and wife agree that sexual fidelity isn't important, there's no reason why both shouldn't have extramarital affairs if they want to.
71. Women should be treated as equal to men with regard to induction into the armed forces.
21. The initiative in dating should come from the man. (negative keying)

Scoring

Subjects responded on a four-point scale to the items. For each item, a reply of "strongly agree" was given one point, of "agree mildly" was given two points, of "disagree mildly" was given four points, and of "disagree strongly" was given five points. Unanswered items were given three points, as were items answered with both an "agree" and "disagree" reply.

We scored each scale in the liberal direction. The formulae below will give the result we used.

Tradit: simply sum the points obtained on all items

Femlib: add the points obtained on all items except #35; add the points obtained on #35 to a constant of 60; subtract the first value from the second

Manlib: add the points obtained on all items except #21; add the points obtained on #21 to a constant of 48; subtract the first value from the second

Scale Statistics from a state university sample

Scale	Females		Males	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Tradit	37.65	10.41	30.28	7.59
Femlib	50.08	5.00	45.35	6.52
Manlib	26.92	6.87	30.16	5.40

Scale Statistics from a religiously-affiliated liberal arts college

Tradit	35.0	9.3	31.9	8.8
Femlib	49.4	4.2	45.9	5.8
Manlib	25.3	6.9	28.2	6.1

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